

STATE OF  
COLORADO

Ridley - DNR, Hunter &lt;hunter.ridley@state.co.us&gt;

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**Inspection Report, Coal Complete, Colowyo, C-1981-019**

1 message

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**Ridley - DNR, Hunter** <hunter.ridley@state.co.us>  
To: "Tennyson, Tony" <tony.tennyson@tristategt.org>

Tue, Jul 1, 2025 at 8:29 AM

Tony,

Please find attached the Division's report for the coal complete inspection conducted on 6/25/25 and 6/26/25. Feel free to reach out with any questions as you review the report.

Kind regards,  
Hunter Ridley (she/her/hers)  
Environmental Protection Specialist I

**COLORADO**  
Division of Reclamation,  
Mining and Safety  
Department of Natural Resources

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**InspReport\_CC\_6\_25\_25.pdf**  
10794K



**PERMIT INFORMATION**

<b>Permit Number:</b> C-1981-019 <b>Mine Name:</b> Colowyo Coal Mine <b>Operator:</b> Colowyo Coal Company L.P. <b>Operator Address:</b> Mr Tony Tennyson 5731 State Highway 13 Meeker, CO 81641	<b>County:</b> Moffat, Rio Blanco <b>Operation Type:</b> Surface <b>Permit Status:</b> Active <b>Ownership:</b> Private
	<b>Operator Representative Present:</b>  Tony Tennyson
<b>Operator Representative Signature: (Field Issuance Only)</b>  	

**INSPECTION INFORMATION**

<b>Inspection Start Date:</b> June 25, 2025 <b>Inspection Start Time:</b> 11:30 <b>Inspection End Date:</b> June 26, 2025 <b>Inspection End Time:</b> 14:30		<b>Inspection Type:</b> Coal Complete Inspection <b>Inspection Reason:</b> Normal I&E Program <b>Weather:</b> Clear	
<b>Joint Inspection Agency:</b>  None		<b>Joint Inspection Contacts:</b>	
<b>Post Inspection Agency:</b>  None		<b>Post Inspection Contacts:</b>	
<b>Inspector(s):</b>  Hunter Ridley  Brock Bowles	<b>Inspector's Signature:</b>  <i>Hunter Ridley</i>		<b>Signature Date:</b>  July 1, 2025

**Inspection Topic Summary**

NOTE: Y=Inspected N=Not Inspected R=Comments Noted V=Violation Issued NA=Not Applicable

N - Air Resource Protection

R - Availability of Records

R - Backfill &amp; Grading

R - Excess Spoil and Dev. Waste

N - Explosives

R - Fish &amp; Wildlife

R - Hydrologic Balance

Y - Gen. Compliance With Mine Plan

N - Other

N - Processing Waste

Y - Roads

R - Reclamation Success

R - Revegetation

N - Subsidence

N - Slides and Other Damage

N - Support Facilities On-site

R - Signs and Markers

N - Support Facilities Not On-site

N - Special Categories Of Mining

R - Topsoil

**COMMENTS**

This was a complete inspection of the Colowyo Coal Mine; DRMS Permit No. C-1981-019, operated by Colowyo Coal Company (Colowyo). The inspection was conducted by Hunter Ridley and Brock Bowles with the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety (Division). Tom Fry of Colowyo accompanied the inspection on the first day and during the first half of the second day and a separate Colowyo representative accompanied the Division for the second half of the last inspection day. Weather during the inspection the first day was foggy with temperatures around 54° F. The second inspection day was clear with temperatures around 82° F.

An application for a Phase I, II and III Bond Release (SL-25) of 1.8 acres in the East Pit (Streeter South Side Ditch) was received by the Division on May 22, 2025. SL-25 proposes to release areas that have been backfilled, regraded and revegetated. The bond release application was called complete by the Division on June 18, 2025. The Division has scheduled a bond release inspection for July 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:30am.

Revision MR-263 proposed the construction of a test pilot plant for the East Taylor Spring. Photographs of the area in progress can be seen below. The revision was deemed complete on May 9, 2025 and approved on May 19, 2025.

Revision MR-264 updated the permit by responding to the Division's comments made under Midterm No. 9 (MT9), which was issued on May 5, 2025. Various pages, maps, and the required reclamation cost estimate were updated. The revision was deemed complete on June 25, 2025, and approved on June 30, 2025.

Surety Increase (SI2) was issued by the Division on July 1, 2025, for updates to the bond estimate made during the MT-09 and MR264 review periods. Colowyo has been provided with a 60-day timeline for an informal conference request regarding the increase.

**AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS – Rule 5.02.4(1):**

Records were checked at the mine office. See details at the end of report.

**SIGNS AND MARKERS – Rule 4.02:**

Mine identification signs were located at the mine entrance and throughout the site. All information for compliance was observed.

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**TOPSOIL – Rule 4.06 Removal 4.06.2; Substitute Materials 4.06.4(4); Storage and Protection 4.06.3; Redistribution 4.06.4:**

Topsoil piles across the site contained appropriate markers (e.g. Photo 10).

**BACKFILL and GRADING – Rule 4.14 Contemporaneous Reclamation 4.14.1; Approximate Original Contour 4.14.2; Highwall Elimination 4.14.1(2)(f); Steep Slopes 4.14.2, 4.27; Handling of Acid and Toxic Materials 4.14.3; Stabilization of Rills and Gullies 4.14.6:**South Taylor

Active backfill operations were observed during this inspection of the South Taylor Pit. Haul trucks were noted at the time of inspection to be distributing spoil material into the southwestern corner of the pit (Photo 15).

Processing equipment remains in place in this area to service gravel from Colowyo's nearby gravel permit.

West Pit

West Pit has been almost entirely backfilled and is largely in its revegetation phase. West Pit was inspected from vantage points along the haul road as well as from below in the reclamation areas (Photos 19-22). A large portion of the West Pit area has been proposed for Phase I Bond Release under SL-24.

Mature grasses were observed in the active revegetation areas and no major erosion rills or gullies were observed from the inspection vantage point. Only six small rill and gully areas were noted for repair in this year's rill and gully report. All these areas are located within the newly backfilled and graded West Pit area and can be expected to experience some type of erosion in its first few years of seeding and growth. The Division noted several of these during the SL-24 bond release inspection in May. However, all rills were relatively small and deemed not to be of major concern.

Collom

While not active at the time of inspection, the Division noted that backfill work had been done in Collom Pit, especially in the eastern box cut area (Photo 5).

**RECLAMATION SUCCESS - Rule 4.15, Rule 3: REVEGETATION – Rule 4.15 Vegetative Cover; Timing:**

The large reclamation parcel along the south side of South Taylor Pit was observed from the haul road. Weed spray crews were observed in this area. Thistle and other small populations of annual weeds were observed throughout the site, but evidence of recent and ongoing weed spraying activity was noted. Site representative Tom Fry noted that the revegetation test plot in West Pit was performing well this year in comparison to previous years.

**EXCESS SPOIL and DEVELOPMENT WASTE – Rule 4.09 Placement; Drainage Control; Surface Stabilization:**

The West Taylor Valley Fill area was inspected from below at the West Taylor Pond (Photo 29). The face of the valley fill is well covered with vegetation, made up of sagebrush and native grasses and no erosional issues were visible. A few elk were noted to be walking across the face of the fill. Water was noted to be flowing through the valley fill underdrain and into West Taylor Pond as designed. Side ditches, which divert water from the face of the fill, were observed to be stable.

Regrade of the South Taylor and Collom spoil piles continue as backfill in various areas of the South Taylor Pit and Collom progresses.

**HYDROLOGICBALANCE - Rule 4.05; Drainage Control 4.05.1, 4.05.2, 4.05.3; Siltation Structures 4.05.5, 4.05.6; Discharge Structures 4.05.7, 4.05.10; Diversions 4.05.4; Effluent Limits 4.05.2; Ground Water**

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**Monitoring 4.05.13; Surface Water Monitoring 4.05.13; Drainage – Acid and Toxic Materials 4.05.8; Impoundments 4.05.6, 4.05.9; Stream Buffer Zones 4.05.18:**

Collom Pit

The following ponds in Collom Pit were inspected this month: Section 26, Sidehill, Section 36, Middle, Section 25. All ponds, except Sidehill Pond, were seen to be holding water. All inlet / outlet areas were free of obstructions and no issues with erosion were noted (Photos 1,2, and 6-8). Most ponds that held water also held some amount of dead Mormon crickets (*Anabrus simplex*), which have been recently migrating in mass numbers across Moffat County.

The following ditches in Collom Pit were inspected this month: Ditches D-1, D-3, and D-4 (Photos 3,4, and 9). Ditch D-2 was inaccessible due to the required wildlife buffer related to a sighting of burrowing owls (discussed in detail below). All ditches appeared to be functioning as designed, with no signs of cutting or major erosion. Small vegetation is present in nearly all un-riprapped areas of the ditches.

The Wilson Storage Pond and Temporary Facilities Ponds were inspected and both found to be dry.

West Pit

The following stock ponds in the West Pit area were inspected this month: TD1, TD2 and ETD1 (Photos 20-22). All stock ponds besides TD2 were seen to be holding a small amount of water, with no erosional issues or concerns noted.

The following ditches in the West Pit area were inspected this month: East Taylor Ditch and Taylor Ditch (Photos 19-22). Both ditches were inspected from within the West Pit reclaimed area. No signs of erosion or cutting were visible along any of the observed West Pit ditches and inlet / outlet design for stock ponds appeared to be functioning properly.

East Pit

The following stock ponds in the East pit were observed during this inspection: EP1, EP2, and EP3 (Photos 17 and 18), and were observed from above at the Section 15 Ditch. Only EP2 appeared to be holding any water and was flowing into Reach 2 of the Final East Pit Ditch as designed.

Section 15 Pond and Ditch (Photo 16) were observed in East Pit. Section 15 Pond was nearly completely dry. Section 16 Pond was found to be holding water and free of any stability or erosional issues (Photo 11). Nearly the entirety of East Section 16 and West section 16 Ditches were walked during the inspection. No issues were noted (Photos 13 and 14).

Where located, gabion boxes along East Pit ditches were in place and rip rap boulders appeared stable and unmoved by flows. All ditches were functioning properly with no signs of erosion or cutting.

Taylor Creek

East Taylor and West Taylor Pond were inspected this month along Taylor Creek (Photos 24 and 29). Both ponds were holding water and had stable embankments. Inlet and outlet structures were free of obstructions. No issues were noted.

A partially built pad for the recently approved test pilot plant at East Taylor Pond was observed (Photo 25). This pad will still need to be lined before the test evaporation system is built. Once in place, the system will pump water from the spoil spring outfall at the pond into the test evaporation system. Colowyo will be assessing the

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success of this system in preparation for the future necessity of perpetual water treatment for East Taylor Pond water.

#### Gossard Loadout

The Stoker Siding and Gossard Ponds were observed in the loadout area. A train was being loaded with coal at the time of inspection and blocked access to Rail Loop Pond. Both ponds were holding water and were free of any issues (Photos 26 and 27).

A few days before the inspection, a fire broke out adjacent to this rail loop area (Photo 28). The Division was notified of the event on June 24, 2025. Mr. Tennyson stated that a drone survey was being conducted to assess the extent of damage. At this time, it is understood that the fire was not caused by Colowyo or related to mine disturbance. Only a small area of the total burn acreage was within the Colowyo permit boundary. Colowyo will submit an MR to document the incident and disturbance.

#### **FISH and WILDLIFE – Rule 4.18:**

No negative impact to wildlife was observed. A herd of adult and adolescent elk were observed across several areas of the site (Photo 12), along with observation of pronghorns, a coyote, and various waterfowl.

In early April 2025, a pair of burrowing owls was observed by Colowyo staff in Collom Pit, south of Topsoil Pile 26A and Ditch D-2. Burrowing owls are a threatened and endangered species in Colorado. Therefore, Colowyo alerted the Division to the sighting as per Rule 4.18(3). Pursuant to Rule 4.18 (3)(b), the Division reached out to the relevant State and Federal agencies which, in this case, was determined to be Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to discuss any required mitigation. All parties determined that Colowyo is already following the CPW recommended buffer zone for “large industrial disturbances”, which is no surface disturbing activities, permitted mining activities, or human encroachment within ¼ mile (1,320 feet) of active burrowing owl nest sites. Colowyo stated that they will continue to maintain this buffer through the stated nesting season from March 15 through August 31.

### **ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS/COMPLIANCE**

No enforcement actions were initiated as a result of this inspection, nor are any pending.

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## PHOTOGRAPHS



*Photo 1: View northeast of Section 26 pond.*



*Photo 2: View south of Sidehill Pond.*

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*Photo 3: View south of Ditch D-4 from Sidehill Pond.*



*Photo 4: View north of Ditch D-1 from the outlet area of Sidehill Pond.*

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*Photo 5: View of previous backfill operations in the eastern box cut of Collom Pit.*



*Photo 6: Section 36 Pond.*

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*Photo 7: Middle Pond.*



*Photo 8: Section 25 Pond.*

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*Photo 9: Ditch D-3 in the background of Section 25 Pond.*



*Photo 10: Example of a topsoil pile labeled in the Collom temporary facilities area.*

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*Photo 11: Section 16 Pond.*



*Photo 12: Herd of elk seen near Section 16 Pond.*

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*Photo 13: View of the southwestern end of the West Section 16 Ditch.*



*Photo 14: View of the northeastern end of the East Section 16 Ditch.*

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*Photo 15: View west into South Taylor Pit and active backfill operations.*



*Photo 16: Section 15 Ditch, dry.*

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*Photo 17: View north of EP2 and Final East Pit Ditch.*



*Photo 18: View west of Final East Pit Ditch, EP1 and EP3 viewed from above at Section 15 ditch.*

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*Photo 19: View south of East Taylor Ditch in West Pit.*



*Photo 20: View west of East Taylor Ditch and ETD1 in West Pit.*

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*Photo 21: View north of Taylor Ditch and TD1.*



*Photo 22: View southwest of Taylor Ditch and TD2 in West Pit.*

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*Photo 23: View east of Section 3 Ponds.*



*Photo 24: View east of East Taylor Pond.*

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*Photo 25: View southeast of the area approved under MR263 to be used for a pilot test plant at East Taylor Pond.*



*Photo 26: View west of Gossard Pond.*

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*Photo 27: View northeast of the Stoker Siding Pond.*



*Photo 28: View east of the recent burn area across CR17.*

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*Photo 29: View south of the West Taylor valley fill and West Taylor pond.*

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**AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS****PERMIT RECORDS**

DRMS Permit	Exp. 11/5/27
Permit Application w/Revisions	Ok
Findings Document	RN-08
Insurance Certificate	3/1/26
Bond Document	Ok
Phased Bond Release Documents/Findings	SL-23
Air Emission Permits	95MF1040/16MF1324F
County Special Use Permits	SUP08-10 & C-05-05
UG Mining Landowner Notification	N/A
Subsidence Monitoring Reports	N/A
Subsidence Monitoring Data	N/A
Rill & Gully Survey	2025
Vegetation Monitoring Data	2024 ARR
Specific Variance Approvals	Ok
Annual Reclamation Reports	2024
Midterm Review Documents	MT-09
DRMS/OSM Inspection Reports/Enforcement Actions (3 Years)	Thru May 2025
Transfers/Succession of Operator	Ok
Temporary Cessation Notification	N/A
Reclamation Cost Estimate	RN-08
<b>CERTIFICATIONS</b>	
Pond Certifications	Thru 1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2025
Annual Certifications for Impoundments	Ok
Fill Certifications for Excess Spoil or Underground Development Waste	Ok
• Quarterly Inspections	Thru 1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2025
• Compaction Testing	N/A
• Final Certification	N/A
Coal Processing Waste Banks	N/A
Haul Road Certifications	Ok
Access Road Certifications	Ok

**HYDROLOGIC RECORDS**

NPDES Permit	CO 0045161
NPDES Records	Thru September 2024
Stormwater Management Plan	Ok
SPCC Plan	Ok
MSHA Pond Inspections	N/A
State Engineer's Pond Inspection	N/A
Quarterly Pond Inspections	Thru January 2025
Annual Hydrology Reports	2024
• Ground Water Monitoring	Ok
• Surface Water Monitoring	Ok
• Spring & Seep Monitoring	Ok
• Mine Water Discharge Monitoring	Ok
• Mine Inflow Study	N/A
• Water Consumption Records	Ok
Well Permits	Ok

**BLASTING RECORDS**

Blasting Publication	2025
Blasting Records (3 years)	Thru 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2025
ATFE Explosives Permit	Ok
Blasting Variances	N/A
Pre-Blast Surveys	Ok

**ADDITIONAL RECORDS (specify)**


**COMMENTS:**


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